

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

By the above amendments, claims 2 and 40-45 have been cancelled without prejudice, claims 1 and 21 have been amended, and new claims 49-55 have been introduced. Claims 1, 3-21, 34-39, 46, 47, and 49-54 are pending.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitation of previous claim 2. New claim 48 corresponds to previous claim 4, now presented in independent form, and new claims 49-50 depend from claim 48. New claims 49 and 50 correspond to original claims 34 and 35, respectively. New claim 51 corresponds to previous claim 19, now presented in independent form, and new claims 52-53 depend from claim 51. New claims 52 and 53 correspond to original claims 34 and 35, respectively. No new matter has been introduced.

The rejection of claims 1, 20, 21, 34, and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,577,137 to Groger et al. ("Groger") is overcome by the above amendments and should be withdrawn. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in the outstanding office action indicated that claims 2-19 and 47 contain allowable subject matter. Because claim 1 now recites the subject matter of previous claim 2, and new claims 48 and 51 recite the subject matter of previous claims 4 and 19, respectively, all of the rejected claims and the new claims are allowable over Groger.

Because claims 1, 3-21, 46, and 47 are allowable, the dependent method of use claims 34-39 should be rejoined (and the restriction withdrawn). In addition, because claims 48 and 51 are allowable for the reasons noted above, claims 49, 50, 52, and 53 also are allowable and should be joined together with claims 48 and 51.

In view of all of the foregoing, applicant submits that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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